

**Public Hearing Testimony of  
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner  
Department of Labor  
Labor and Public Employees Committee  
February 19, 2013**

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Tercyak, Senator Markley, Representative Smith and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 188, AAC Concerning Professional Development and Unemployment Benefits**. My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Labor Commissioner.

I would like to comment on this bill. A state's Unemployment Compensation Program is a federal-state partnership, which needs to conform to federal law. It is a requirement of federal and state Unemployment Compensation law that an individual be able to work and available for work for any week in which the claimant files for benefits. Federal law does permit, however, an individual engaged in "approved training" to waive the availability requirement while engaged in such approved training. Therefore, an individual's educational activities would be reviewed for compliance with Department regulations, prior to a determination of eligibility for unemployment benefits. It cannot be an automatic approval.

If the claimant's activities do not meet the definition of approved training, the Administrator will further seek to determine if the claimant's educational activities do not restrict the claimant's availability for work sufficient to meet the student availability requirements pursuant to section 31-235 of the general statutes and section 31-235-20 of the Department regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and I am available to answer any questions.